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'2d Gunman Theory' Persists

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Mystery Element Multiplies Myths On Kennedy Death

"Myths have traditionally surrounded the dramatic assassinations of history. The rumors and theories about the assassination of Abraham Lincoln that are still being publicized were for the most part bruited within months of his death. Wherever there is any element of mystery in such dramatic events, misconceptions often result from sensational speculation."—Warren Commission Report, Sept. 24, 1964.

By JACK V. FOX

DALLAS, June 26 (UPI).

THE automobiles go whizzing down the slope of Elm st. in Dealey Plaza and every few minutes a cab will slow to a near halt, the driver will turn and point back and up at a sixth-floor window of a square building and say: "This is where Kennedy was, and that's where Oswald fired the shots."

"Almost every visitor to Dallas can count on being taken by friends (or going by taxi) within hours of arrival to that spot and the wonder is there haven't been a spate of auto accident injuries at the site of the assassination of President John F. Kennedy on Nov. 22, 1963.

The initial reaction of many first-time visitors is that Dealey Plaza is much more compact, much smaller, than visualized from still and TV pictures, and that the Texas

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School Book Depository Building looms so prominently over Elm st. that the marksmanship of a rifleman from the

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building is not so remarkable.

Rumors Stilled

Yet, more than two and one-half years after the tragic assassination, the doubts recur and the rumors multiply that the full story has never been told — and particularly that a second gunman other than Lee Harvey Oswald fired that day.

The Warren Commission foresaw that incredulity would greet its finding that an obscure figure, with no apparent motive and denying guilt to the end, could alone bring off such a fantastic crime, then be mortally wounded himself literally in the hands of the police. It published an appendix to its findings knocking down most of the wilder rumors and gossip.

But there are eyewitnesses who are still convinced there was a second gunman. There are photographs, blown up many times, which, like making out an elephant in a cloud formation, seem to show a rifleman atop a grassy knoll.

There is the undisputed fact that most of the bystanders that day looked not at the depository building when the shots rang out but in a different direction altogether.

Most of all there is a new book, "Inquest," written by Edward J. Epstein, 30, which started out as a master's thesis at Cornell University and wound up making startling

challenges to the Warren Commission Report.

Shot From Trees

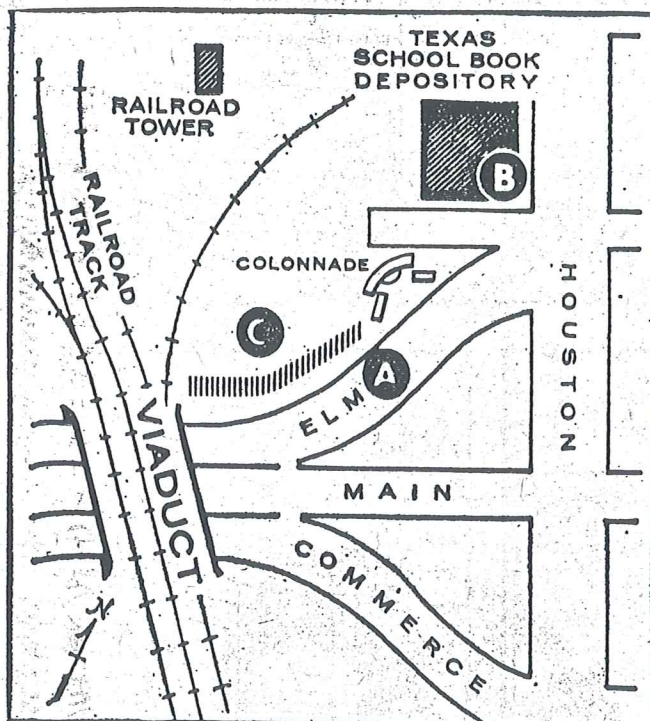
It and another recent book, "Whitewash," by former Senate Investigator Harold Weisberg, have led to pro and con arguments in magazines. Coming out in August is still another book, "Rush to Judgment," by Mark Lane, who represented Oswald's mother in the hearings.

I went to Dallas reasonably satisfied that the Warren Report was substantially correct and its main finding sound. After a week of talking with witnesses, scouring the report and studying the challenges, I was personally still satisfied. But there are many people who are not.

S. M. Holland, a small man in his late 50s or early 60s, sits in the living room of a modest home in suburban Irving, Tex. He has worked for the Union Terminal Co. for 28 years, rising to the job of railroad signal supervisor.

Holland is certain that a separate shot came from beneath trees on a grassy knoll north and west of the de-

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Map locates area in Dallas, Tex., where President John F. Kennedy was assassinated. Designated spots are (A) approximate location of Kennedy car when he was hit, (B) corner of building from which Lee Harvey Oswald fired and (C) point where, some persons contend, another sniper may have fired.

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pository building. At the time, he was standing on a railroad viaduct under which Elm st. passes. Looking straight ahead and down, he had one of the best views of any eyewitness.

Holland says there were four separate shots. (The Warren Report concludes there were three.) He says the first came from the book building and hit the President. The second came from the same place and hit

Gov. John Connally riding in the same car.

"The third shot came from behind the picket fence to the north of Elm st. There was a puff of smoke under the trees like someone had thrown out a Chinese firecracker and a report of a gun entirely different from the one which fired from the book building. I don't know whether it hit anything."

Holland said the fourth shot from the depository struck the President in the head, blowing away a large portion of his skull.

Holland says he, a Dallas policeman and several other railroad employees rushed to a parking area behind the picket fence. They found no one there and no signs of empty cartridges.

Footprints Found

Backed up against the fence, says Holland, were a station wagon and a sedan. The ground was muddy and, according to the railroad man, there were two muddy marks on the bumper of the station wagon as if someone had stood there to look over the fence. The footprints led to the sedan and ended.

"I have often wondered," says Holland, "if a man could have climbed into the trunk of that car and pulled the lid shut on himself, then someone else have driven it away later."

Roy Truly, a soft-spoken, middle-aged man, stands in the front hall of the Book Depository Building near the stairs where Oswald passed after the shooting. Truly is building superintendent and it was he who hired Oswald.

"I feel partly responsible for what happened," Truly says. "But I feel the greater blame lies in that I was not told of Oswald's background."

Truly that day stood with a small group of spectators in the street directly below the sixth-floor window and he acknowledges that when gunfire was heard not only he, but the people and police around him, looked not back but ahead and in the

direction of the knoll which has an ornamental white cement colonnade at the top.

Echoes of Sound

Truly is satisfied now that it was an echo of some distortion of sound. Dallas police tests have established such a reaction.

The only irritation Truly shows is about the distortion of his story, particularly on the part of European newsmen who have talked with him and then written lurid accounts, starting: "Who Really Killed Kennedy?"

"I haven't the faintest doubt," he says, "that Oswald alone killed the President."

Amateur motion pictures were made of the assassination. One is a film made by Abraham Zaprunder, a spectator who was standing on a wall of the colonnade looking down on the limousine. It has been a prime piece of evidence in establishing the sequence and timing of the shots.

Another moving picture record was made by Orville O. Nix, an employe of the General Services Administration in Dallas, taken from the other side of the road and showing the knoll, the picket fence and the colonnade as well as the limousine.

One frame of the Nix film, enlarged many times, shows what could be made out as the rear of a light-colored station wagon wedged in between the colonnade and the fence. If the picture is studied long enough, one can believe he sees a man in sun glasses, leaning on the top of the station wagon and pointing a rifle down toward Elm st. But studied long enough, one can also imagine a white-faced steer staring down from above the colonnade.

Blocked by Piling

Inspection of the area shows a car just could jam in between the colonnade and the fence, but it would have to get over a heavy wooden piling and would have been most conspicuous.

Lee J. Bowers, Jr., now sells lots in a land development tract in Dallas. He was employed by the Union Terminal Co. in 1963 and was in a signal tower to the northwest of the book depository building and about 50 yards behind the colonnade and

the picket fence. He had a clear view of the parking area there.

He observed two men in the area between the fence and the colonnade before the shooting but did not notice them later. Had an automobile been wedged into that area, he could not have missed it.

Bowers says he saw a "flash" or "some kind of disturbance" under the trees atop the knoll right at the time of the shooting. He saw no individual firing or anyone rushing from the scene but he thinks there is "at least a 50-50 chance that something happened there" and it could have been a second gunman.

Mrs. Jean Hill, a schoolteacher, is the only eyewitness who thought she saw an assassin suspect outside the book building. She was so convinced it was a man in a brown coat running along the knoll that she started in chase but he disappeared.

White Dog Seen

In her report to the Warren Commission, Mrs. Hill acknowledged that she also thought she saw a white dog in the car between the President and Mrs. Kennedy. She later discovered it must have been the flowers Mrs. Kennedy was holding. She said her husband became "hilarious" in telling people about the dog. They are now divorced.

Capt. J. W. (Will) Fritz, chief of the Homicide Division of the Dallas Police Department, sits in his third floor office wearing a straw hat. He is the most reluctant man in Dallas to talk of the shooting. He was the one who interrogated Oswald. Oswald was in his custody when he was killed.

Fritz refused to discuss the case mainly on the grounds that litigation involving Jack Ruby is still in the courts.

I asked Fritz whether people still brought in new evidence or stories. He declined to say. I asked whether his department would investigate significant new evidence. He said the question was theoretical and hypothetical.

I sked him whether he considered the Oswald-Kennedy case closed. In his only positive answer, he said:

"No case is ever closed."

Saw Oswald Aim

The one person who saw Oswald standing in the window actually aiming a shot was Howard L. Brennan, a 45-year-old

steamfitter who was standing below, across from the building. His identification led to Oswald's capture.

Another spectator, Arnold L. Rowland, then 18, who worked in a pizza cafe, certified he saw Oswald in the window with a rifle 15 minutes before the motorcade arrived but thought he was a Secret Service security guard and said nothing to a Dallas policeman standing 12 feet away.

Had Rowland tapped the officer on the shoulder and asked, "Who is that in the window with the rifle?" the entire course of history might have been changed.

Rowland told the commission he also saw a "middle-aged

Negro "hanging out another window on the sixth floor of the repository building shortly before the assassination.

Interrogating brought out that while Rowland mentioned to his wife, standing alongside him, seeing Oswald at the window he at the time said nothing about a second man. Checks showed Rowland had given misinformation about his education and other subjects and his wife said he tended to exaggerate.

The commission questioned his credibility.

Under Pressure

The biggest controversy has been stirred by the book by Epstein, now studying for a doctor's degree at Harvard.

Epstein established that the commission and its staff did a job under pressure and that there were internal disputes and conflicts over what should go into the report. His principal

argument is that the commission, in haste to reassure the country and the world that Oswald alone was involved, selected testimony and evidence to fit that conclusion.

His main specific challenge was to the commission's finding that there was "persuasive" evidence that President Kennedy and Gov. Connally were hit by the same bullet, passing through the President's throat and into the Governor's chest, wrist and thigh.

Epstein argues that the single bullet theory had to be accepted because a viewing of the Zapruder film showed the timing was such there must have been one bullet hitting both men or else two gunmen.

When Connally appeared before the commission, he was asked:

"What is the best estimate that you have as to the time span between the sound of the first shot and the feeling of

someone hitting you in the back which you just described?"

Connally replied:

"A very, very brief span of time. . . I immediately thought that this—that I had been shot. I knew it when I just looked down and I was covered with blood and the thought immediately passed through my mind that there were either two or three people involved or more in this or someone was shooting with an automatic rifle. These were just thoughts that went through my mind because of the rapidity of these two, of the first shot plus the blow that I took . . ."

After the Warren Report was issued, Connally said again that he did not think he was hit by the same bullet which wounded President Kennedy.

The Warren Report dealt with Connally's impression in three ways: (1) The first shot may have missed both men, (2) Con-

nally may have been wounded but there was a "delayed reaction between the time the bullet struck and the time he realized that he was hit, (3) the "single bullet" theory is the most logical, but it is not necessary to finding that only one gunman was involved.

Epstein contends that a hole in the back of the President's coat shows he was struck high in the back but not in the neck.

The counter-argument is that the coat could have been hunched up with Kennedy waving at the crowds.

Report Altered

Epstein goes so far as to contend that the report of the autopsy performed at the Bethesda Naval Hospital the night of the assassination was later altered to conform with the single shot theory.

Epstein never names those who might have altered the autopsy report.

The counsel for the commission who conducted most of the investigation into the source of the shots is Arlen Specter, now Philadelphia District Attorney. Specter says he saw the original handwritten autopsy report and that no changes were made.

The fact is, Specter adds, that Epstein has produced no evidence or witnesses on any subject to back up his allegations and has advanced no arguments which cannot be answered and disproved.

The glaring weakness of Epstein's book is that he has done what he accused the commission of doing. He has selected and omitted to fit his theory. He did not go to Dallas to question any witness or talk with any of the doctors who performed the autopsy.

The arguments and doubt will not end. In Europe, it is an almost universal public conclusion that there has been a cover-up. The